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FRED GALVAN

LEBANON TRIES AGAIN

ANNCR: LEBANON HAS A NEW GOVERNMENT TODAY, HEADED BY ELIAS SARKIS AS PRESIDENT. NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN HAS THESE THOUGHTS:

VOICE: EIGHTEEN MONTHS AND AT LEAST THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND DEATHS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF ITS CIVIL WAR, LEBANON HAS A NEW PRESIDENT-- THE SIXTH SINCE THE COUNTRY'S BIRTH AS AN INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC IN 1943. ON THE SURFACE, THE SWEARING-IN OF PRESIDENT SARKIS IS A HOPEFUL NOTE IN AN OTHERWISE BLEAK PICTURE OF CONTINUED STRIFE BETWEEN MARONITE CHRISTIANS AND LEBANESE MOSLEMS ALLIED TO MILITANT PALESTINIAN REFUGEES. AT THE VERY LEAST THE TAKE-OVER BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT JUSTIFIES SOME HOPES-- THAT THE FIGHTING WILL ABATE AND THAT PERHAPS ALL LEBANESE CAN FINALLY UNITE TO PUT THEIR DEVASTATED COUNTRY TOGETHER AGAIN-- NOT ONLY POLITICALLY BUT ECONOMICALLY.

THE JOB FACING THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT IS STAGGERING, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF OBJECTIONS TO ITS INSTALLATION BY SOME LEBANESE FACTIONS. LEBANON'S NEW GOVERNMENT WILL NEED ALL THE HELP IT CAN GET -- PARTICULARLY FROM ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS, WHOSE STAKES ARE THE HIGHEST IN SEEING A STABLE, UNIFIED LEBANON ONCE MORE TAKE ITS PLACE AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE MIDDLE EAST WORLD. ISRAEL, TOO, HAS A MAJOR STAKE IN SEEING A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN LEBANON EVOLVE NOW. FOR STABILITY THERE WILL ENHANCE CHANCES FOR A NEW START IN THE SEARCH FOR A SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB WORLD. THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR, IT IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED, HAS STALLED THE ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE THAT CONFLICT, INCLUDING THE MEDIATION EFFORTS OF OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES.

IN THE ECONOMIC AREA, LEBANON ALSO WILL NEED A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF HELP. ITS ECONOMY IS DEVASTATED. THE PHYSICIAL JOB OF REBUILDING ITS CITIES, ITS AGRICULTURE, ITS INDUSTRIES-- PARTICULARLY ITS BANKING INDUSTRY WHICH SERVED AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE WEST FOR DECADES-- WILL REQUIRE YEARS OF CONCERTED EFFORT BY ALL LEBANESE. THUS, LEBANON WILL NEED WHAT COULD BE CALLED A MODERN VERSION OF THE MARSHALL PLAN-- THIS TIME CARRIED OUT BY ECONOMIC AID FROM ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS LINKED WITH SIMILAR ASSISTANCE FROM SUCH WESTERN FRIENDS OF LEBANON AS FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES.

IN ANY CASE, WITH THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT JUST INSTALLED, IT IS TOO EARLY TO DISCERN WHETHER THE LEBANESE PEOPLE WILL SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES IT OFFERS THEM TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES. HOPES RAISED BY MORE THAN FIFTY CEASE-FIRES NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE WARRING FACTIONS HAVE BEEN TOO OFTEN DASHED TO JUSTIFY MORE THAN A CAUTIOUS HOPE AT THIS TIME THAT THE FIGHTING WILL FINALLY END. THE REALIZATION OF THAT HOPE, OF COURSE, RESTS WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT. TO BIND THE WOUNDS THAT HAVE SO TRAGICALLY WRACKED THE LEBANESE FAMILY FOR A YEAR AND A HALF, IT MUST RECRUIT THE SUPPORT OF ALL LEBANESE. FOR ULTIMATELY THAT'S WHERE THE SOLUTION MUST COME FROM-- THE WILL OF THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES TO GIVE IT SUBSTANCE. NO AMOUNT OF OUTSIDE ECONOMIC AID OR POLITICAL EFFORT CAN BE DECISIVE IN SUCH A SITUATION IF THE PEOPLE MOST DIRECTLY AFFECTED LACK THAT WILL.

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